

SPECIFICATION

A CHILDREN'S CYCLE

I. RELATED APPLICATIONS

5 This is a continuation of U.S. Serial No. 09/206,050 filed on December 4, 1998, which is a continuation-in-part of PCT application PCT/CN97/00059 filed June 11, 1997, which claims the priority benefit of Chinese application serial no. 96230036.5 filed June 11, 1996, Chinese application serial no. 97106399.0 filed April 22, 1997.

II. FIELD OF THE INVENTION

10 The present invention relates to a children's cycle.

III. BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Generally, a children's cycle comprises frames and wheels. Sometimes the cycle further includes a push-handle erected at the back of the tricycle for pushing the cycle. Usually, a children's cycle can not be used as a rocker such as a rocking horse.

15 IV. SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention features a children's cycle which can be used as a rocker such as a rocking horse.

A children's cycle according to the present invention comprises frames, wheels under the frames and pedals for rotating the wheels. The frames include a front frame and a rear frame
20 rotatably connected by a shaft. In a preferred embodiment, a front fork is provided under the front portion of the front frame. A front wheel is provided on the front fork. A left handlebar and a right handlebar are provided (preferably symmetrically) on the upper portion of the front frame. A saddle is provided above the middle portion of the rear frame.

In a preferred embodiment, the children's cycle is a tricycle wherein a left rear wheel and
25 a right rear wheel are (preferably symmetrically) provided at each side under the rear portion of the rear frame.

An arcuate bottom rack is movably connected to the cycle body. When the arcuate bottom rack is provided under the frames, it bows downward and contacts the ground and supports the cycle body composed of the frames and wheels. When the arcuate bottom rack is
30 moved away from the underside of the cycle body, the cycle body is supported by the wheels.

The present invention has the following advantages over other children's cycles:

1) With the arcuate bottom rack bowing downward under the frames, the children's cycle functions as a rocker;

2) When the arcuate bottom rack is moved away from the underside of the frames so that the wheels touch the ground, the subject of the present invention functions as a children's cycle. When the arcuate bottom rack is moved to the back of the frames, it can be used as a push-handle.

The above object and features, as well as other features of the present invention are described further in the detailed description of the invention with reference to the drawings.

10 V. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a perspective view showing a children's tricycle according to the present invention which can be pushed by hand.

Fig. 2 is a perspective view showing the children's tricycle in which the push-handle is turned downward to the underside of the cycle body so that the tricycle can be used as a rocker.

15 Fig. 3 is a view showing the lock for locking the arcuate bottom rack to the rear frame when the arcuate bottom rack is moved to the back of the rear frame so as to be used as a push-handle.

Fig. 4 is a sectional view showing that the front frame is connected to the rear frame by a shaft, and that the front frame and the rear frame are connected by a locking means.

20 Fig. 5 is view showing an alternative way for locking the arcuate bottom rack to the rear frame when the arcuate bottom rack is moved to the back of the rear frame so as to be used as a push-handle;

Fig. 6 is an outside view showing a length of a side bar of the arcuate bottom rack;

Fig. 7 is a sectional view taken along the A-A direction in the Fig. 6.

25 The parts shown in these drawings are numbered as follows: (1) arcuate bottom rack, (2) transverse bars, (3) rear frame, (4) front wheel, (5) rear wheels, (6) rear axle, (7) spring, (8) head of an inserted pin, (9) inserted pin, (10) saddle, (11) handlebars, (12) pedals, (13) front fork, (14) front frame, (15) protection sheath, (16) opening, (17) spring, (18) hook, (19) hook pin, (20) shaft, (21) attaching rope, (22) inserted pin, (23) storing hole for the inserted pin, (24) front axle.

VI. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

In reference to the figures, a children's cycle according to the present invention comprises front and rear frames 3 and 14, front wheels 4 and 5 mounted under the frames, and a pair of pedals 12 for rotating the wheels. The pedals 12 may be connected to the front axle 24 of the front wheel 4 by a crank (when the frames are those of a tricycle as illustrated herein), or may be connected to a chain wheel by a crank while the chain wheel in turn is connected to the rear axle 6 by a chain transmission (when the frames are those of a bicycle). The frames comprise a front frame 14, and a rear frame 3. The front frame 14 and the rear frame 3 are rotatably connected to each other by a shaft 20. A front fork 13 is provided under the front portion of the front frame 14. A front wheel 4 is provided on the front fork 13. A left handlebar and a right handlebar 11 are provided (preferably symmetrically) on the upper portion of the front frame 14. A saddle 10 is provided approximately above the middle portion of the rear frame 3. A left rear wheel and a right rear wheel 5 are provided (preferably symmetrically) under the rear portion of the rear frame 3.

In addition to the structure in a children's tricycle or a children's bicycle as described above, the children's cycle according to the present invention has the following features: An arcuate bottom rack 1 is provided under the frames and the wheels. The rack 1 contacts the ground so as to support the cycle body, and the children's cycle can be used as a rocker. The arcuate bottom rack 1 is movably connected to the cycle body so that when the arcuate bottom rack 1 is moved away from the underside of the cycle body the cycle body is supported by the wheels and the cycle functions as a tricycle or a bicycle.

When the subject of the invention is used as a cycle, the arcuate bottom rack 1 can be a separate accessory member and be separated from the cycle body. In this design, the arcuate bottom rack 1 is connected to the frames only when the cycle is used as a rocker. Alternatively, such as shown in Fig. 1, the arcuate bottom rack 1 may be designed such that its rear portion is movably connected to the lower rear portion of the rear frame 3. When the arcuate bottom rack 1 is moved to the back of the rear frame 3 and is erected upright there, the arcuate bottom rack 1 can be used as a push-handle for pushing the cycle. The latter is a preferred design.

There are different ways of connecting the arcuate bottom rack to the frames. One example is a plug-in connection between the rear portion of the arcuate bottom rack 1 and the rear frame 3. When the arcuate bottom rack 1 is moved to the back of the rear frame 3 and

erected there, the lower portion of the arcuate bottom rack 1 is in a plug-in connection with the rear frame 3. Different insertion holes are used with different functional positions of the arcuate bottom rack 1.

5 In particular, insertion holes that are slightly larger than the ends of the arcuate bottom rack are formed in the lower portion of the rear frame 3. The ends of the arcuate bottom rack 1 are inserted in one of the insertion holes so that a plug-in connection is achieved. To change the functional positions of the cycle, the arcuate bottom rack 1 is withdrawn from one insertion hole and then is inserted into another hole, so that the arcuate bottom rack 1 is erected at the back of the rear frame 3. The arcuate bottom rack 1 may also be used as a back support when it is
10 positioned at the back of the rear frame 3. Another way for connecting the arcuate bottom rack to the frames is an articulate connection. The rear portion of the arcuate bottom rack 1 is articulated to the rear portion of the rear frame 3 such that the arcuate bottom rack 1 may be rotated around relative to the rear frame 3 so as to obtain different functional positions.

15 A lock is provided to hold the rear frames 3 and the arcuate bottom rack 1 together when the arcuate bottom rack 1 is erected at the back of the rear frame 3. An example is shown in Fig. 3 in which an inserted pin 9 with a head 8 is provided in the rear frame 3. The inserted pin 9 is inserted in a hole formed in the arcuate bottom rack 1 and is slidable in the left-and-right direction.

20 Another example is shown in Fig. 5 in which a hook 18 is movably connected to the rear frame 3. The hook 18 catches the transverse bars 2 of the arcuate bottom rack 1. Other kinds of locks are also applicable.

In a preferred embodiment, the arcuate bottom rack 1 includes two arcuate side bars bowing downward and transverse bars connecting the side bars. When the arcuate bottom rack 1 is moved to the underside of the cycle body, the front wheel 4 rests on the transverse bars 2 (see
25 Fig. 2). The rear portion of the arcuate bottom rack 1 is articulated to the rear axle 6 of the rear wheels 5. The front portion of the arcuate bottom rack 1 is used to support the front portion of the frames or to support the front wheel 4. The rear portion of the arcuate bottom rack 1 is used to support the rear wheels 5 or to support the rear portion of the frames.

30 When the cycle is used as a rocker, it is desirable for safety reasons to prevent relative rotation between the front frame 14 and the rear frame 3 with a lock. For example, (see Fig. 4.), an insertion hole is formed in the front frame 14, and a corresponding insertion hole is also

formed in the back frame which is aligned with the former hole. A rotation-preventing pin 22 is inserted in the insertion holes formed in the front frame 14 and the rear frame 3. The pin 22 is attached to the front frame 14 by an attaching rope 21. A storing hole 23 for the inserted pin is formed in the front frame 14. When the front frame 14 is not locked with the rear frame 3, the pin 22 is kept in the storing hole 23. Other kinds of locks are usable with the cycle of this invention.

A protection sheath 15 can be provided on the arcuate bottom rack 1 so as to prevent the arcuate bottom rack 1 from being worn out (*see* Figs. 6 and 7). There is an opening 16 formed on the sheath 15 which is open longitudinally for replacing the sheath 15. Spaced ribs can be formed on the sheath 15 and extend peripherally. This design reduces the amount of the materials needed to make the sheath 15.

Preferably, the arcuate bottom rack 1 is U-shaped and the ends of its opening are articulated with the rear portion of the rear frame 3. The opening of the arcuate bottom rack 1 becomes gradually wider backward so as to obtain a better stability of the arcuate bottom rack 1 and therefore the child will not turn over sideward when he rides on the cycle. The ends of the opening of the arcuate bottom rack 1 are articulated to the rear axle 6 at the inner sides of the rear wheels 5. The ends of the opening of the arcuate bottom rack 1 extend backward under the axle 6, and they go beyond the rear axle 6 (so that the arcuate bottom rack 1 may be extended and the curvature of the rack 1 may be reduced for the sake of safety), and then bend upward and forward so as to form a curve section. The ends of this curve section is articulated with the rear axle 6 when the arcuate bottom rack 1 is erected at the back of the rear frame 3, it may stand upright or slant.

The frames shown in Figs. 1 and 2 are those of a tricycle, however, the present invention is also applicable to a children's bicycle. In a children's bicycle, a pair of small rear wheels can be installed on both sides of a single large wheel to prevent the bicycle from turning over sideward. When the bicycle is used as a rocker, the small rear wheels can be designed to rest on the arcuate bottom rack 1 in the same way as the rear wheels of a tricycle do.

Other embodiments of this invention are disclosed in the following claims. As will be obvious to those skilled in the art, variations and modifications may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.